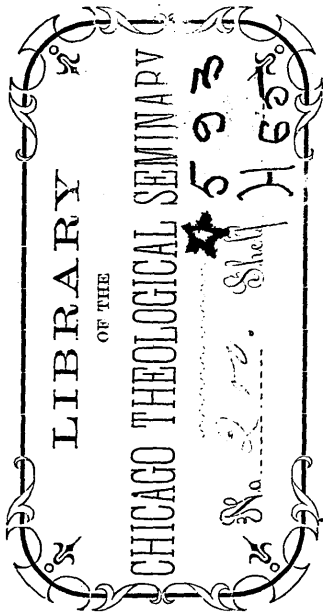




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# PREPARATION

TO

# PROFESS RELIGION.

BY

L. IVES HOADLY.

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“And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”—1 Pet. 3: 15.

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INTRODUCTION.

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## TO THE CONVERT :—

To make a profession of religion is a very solemn and serious duty. This you may infer from the words of the Saviour, Luke 12: 8, 9, “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God;” and again from what the apostle Paul says, Rom. 10: 9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Scarcely less important is it to make the profession intelligently, and with good understanding of all that is involved, according to the counsel of



the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 3: 15, "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." To do this, you need to have not only a sound Christian experience, but a thorough knowledge of the doctrines and duties of religion. Upon such a knowledge, moreover, depends, in a great measure, not only your satisfaction in making a profession, but your firmness and stability in maintaining it, and also your usefulness as a Christian.

The design of this little book is to assist you in obtaining that knowledge. It is made up principally of Questions, with Scriptural References. Answers are sometimes given, and Notes are added, here and there, by way of direction and counsel, or of suggestion, explanation, and caution. Most of the questions are plain and simple, though some involve others more or less difficult. The whole is commended to your serious attention, all the more earnestly because of the danger you may be in of coming forward to make a profession, as many others have done, with but

a very superficial preparation. The book, though prepared so that it may be read without turning to the Scriptures referred to, is designed specially for study. Take lessons in it, and study them thoroughly. Look out the passages quoted briefly, and examine them in their connection, and possess yourself fully of the teachings they afford. In the Experimental Series there are no references, because references could not of course be given to show how you feel and what you think, but you are to answer from your own mind and heart according to your experience, — in all which, however, never forget that your religious experience must always be judged of by the Word of God as the only safe standard.

You will find the Questions in three series. — 1. *Experimental*. 2. *Theological*. 3. *Miscellaneous*. The references are, many of them, designedly brief — some also are indirect only; yet such, I trust, will be found pertinent in what they *imply*, and legitimate and sound in application. The abbreviations are as in Scripture Question Books generally. A line is left blank here and

there, to indicate a change more or less in the subject, or in the bearings of the Questions.

And now, let me press it upon you, in studying these Questions, to reflect carefully and solemnly on the truths and duties they bring to view, and be faithful with yourself in testing your heart and mind by the application of them to your honest consciousness, especially those of the Experimental Series, and such in the other series as partake of an experimental character. And may the Lord bless you, and make you a sound, thorough, consistent, Bible Christian all your life, to the honor of his grace, the comfort of your own soul, and the spiritual good of many souls around you.

## QUESTIONS.

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### I. EXPERIMENTAL.

1. WHY do you hope you are a Christian?
2. How have you been led to view yourself as a sinner?
3. What, more than formerly, have you thought of the character of God, and of his holy Law?
4. What, of the regard He has shown our sinful race?
5. What, of the way He proposes to save us?
6. Describe what you understand it to be, to become a Christian?

7. How far, in describing it, do you describe your own experience?

8. How do you regard your own experience as compared with that of others? or, wherein do you regard the experience of all Christians as alike, and that of individual Christians as different? — *Note.* Because your experience is like that of some whose experience you think sound, do not conclude that yours must of course be sound; neither because it is not like theirs, that it is of course unsound; but judge of your experience by its own proper evidence. 1 Cor. 12: 6; “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” The great question for you to consider is, Does your experience accord with what is required in the Scriptures? If you have “good hope through grace,” it must be based on evidence; and the proper evidence of such hope is conscious “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” as the

only ground of justification and acceptance with God, both working together to produce obedience to God's will, and devotion to his service and the upbuilding of his kingdom in the world. Reflect prayerfully and with close self-application on John 3: 6, 7. Rom. 5: 1. 2 Cor. 5: 17.

9. What is your purpose in life, now that you hope you have become a Christian?

10. How does Christ's direction, Matt. 6: 33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," appear to you, and what is your determination in relation to it? —*Note.* Read here, with solemn consideration, what the Saviour says, Luke 14: 26, 27; "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple;" and

again, verse 33; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Compare Matthew 10:37, and 16:24-28. Consider seriously if you are prepared to give religion and its duties the *first* place in your regard.

11. What have you thought about entering into covenant with God?

12. Which has appeared to you the greater, the duty, or the privilege?

13. How has hope and fear, respectively, affected you in relation to it? and what conclusion do you rest in, on the whole?

14. If you covenant with God, what have you thought, as to fulfilling your covenant obligations?

15. If not truly hearty in covenanting, have you thought how it will aggravate your guilt?

16. Have you fully counted the cost of living a truly religious life?

17. On what do you rely, in your purpose to carry out and sustain such a life?—

*Note.* Consult John 10: 28. 17: 11, 12, 15. Rom. 8: 28–39. 1 Pet. 1: 5.

18. How does a humble, active, self-denying life appear to you,—inviting, or forbidding?

19. How do you regard secret prayer, and the devotional reading of the Bible?—

*Note.* Compare your experience with that of David, and other saints mentioned in Scripture. Consult Ps. 1: 2. 63: 6. Acts 17: 11.

20. How, family worship, meetings for social prayer, and for public worship on the Sabbath?

21. How, all these *now* compared with *formerly*? also how, the honor and glory of God,—his holiness, justice, and sovereignty, as well as his goodness? How, your fellow-men,—Christians and the impenitent? the conversion of sinners, and the cause of Christ in the world?



22. Do you think you heartily approve of the penalty of God's holy law, and its application to yourself?

23. Without knowing God's secret purpose concerning you, can you, do you think, cheerfully leave all your future destiny entirely to his disposal, both for time and eternity?

24. How have you thus far succeeded in your Christian life? — *Note.* This question contemplates that there should be suitable time after conversion before a profession is made, that the convert may have better knowledge of his state, and not hurry on to a profession half prepared. The apostles, with their power of "discerning of spirits," admitted to a profession immediately on conversion; yet, in doing so, even they, in some instances, admitted the unworthy, — Acts 5: 1-11, — which may well caution all against an over hasty profession; yet neither should a profession be too long delayed.

25. What embarrassments and discouragements have you found on the one hand, and what facilities and encouragements on the other?

26. How has your experience, thus far, proved, compared with your experience, at first? If different, wherein? and has it been more or less encouraging?

27. Whatever may have been your experience, have you a steady purpose and desire to persevere in the Christian life?

28. Do you seriously think that your natural love of the world and its vanities is effectually broken, so that you can "come out" from it without regret, and "be separate?"

29. What is now your estimate of the grace of Christ to you? and what your sense of obligation to him?

30. Is it your conviction, that the change which you trust is wrought in you has been wrought entirely by the Holy Spirit?

31. In view of all these questions, how stands your evidence that you are a Christian? — *Note.* Call to mind that beautiful line of Cowper, —

“A soul redeemed demands a life of praise.”

And richer still, and more closely appropriate, that expression of gratitude and resolution of the Psalmist, Ps. 116 : 12–14, —

“What shall I render unto the Lord,  
For all his benefits toward me?  
I will take the cup of salvation,  
And call upon the name of the Lord,  
I will pay my vows unto the Lord  
Now in the presence of all his people.”

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## II. THEOLOGICAL.

1. Why do you believe in God? Ps. 19 : 1, 2; “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handi-

work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." Rom. 1: 20; "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, even his eternal power and Godhead." Heb. 3: 4; "Every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."

2. What should you think of him who should say that nature, or the universe, is God? Ps. 14: 1; "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." — *Note.* Read "Paley's Natural Theology."

3. What evidence have you that there is a God in your own consciousness as an intelligent and accountable creature? — *Note.* Besides consulting your own consciousness, consult also the 139th Psalm, vs. 1–4; "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising: thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasseth my

path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." vs. 7-12; "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there: If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me, yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." Here we have the Psalmist's deep consciousness of the all-surrounding, all-pervading presence of God. And so the Apostle Paul, Acts 17: 27, 28, f. c.; "That they [men] should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,

though he be not far from every one of us : for in him we live, and move, and have our being." Consider, moreover, the general consciousness of all men, whether it does not lead to belief in God. The consciousness of the Psalmist and of the apostle, though that of *believers* was nevertheless that of *men* also; and though there are those who declare themselves atheists, they, notwithstanding, show, many times, in their conduct, that they, after all, believe in God; and that their doubt of the being of God, and their insensibility to the fact, come only of the perverse feeling of "the carnal mind" in them, not liking "to retain God in their knowledge." Rom. 8: 7; 1: 28. The fact remains the same as to the general consciousness of all. How much more, then, may one who has been converted, be expected to have a greatly quickened sense of God's existence.

4. What do you believe God to be? —  
*Ans.* “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” — *Assembly’s Catechism.* John 4: 24; “God is a Spirit.” Ps. 147: 5; “His understanding is infinite.” Ps. 90: 2; “From everlasting, thou art God.” Mal. 3: 6; “I am the Lord; I change not.” Heb. 13: 8; “Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” Ex. 3: 14; “I am that I am.” Rom. 11: 33; “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Gen. 17: 1; “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” Mat. 19: 26; “With God, all things are possible.” Rev. 19: 6; “The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Eph. 1: 11; “Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Ps. 99: 9; “Exalt the Lord

our God, and worship at his holy hill : for the Lord our God is holy." Ps. 89 : 14 ; "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." Ps. 119 : 68 ; "Thou art good, and doest good ; teach me thy statutes." Num. 23 : 19 ; "God is not a man that he should lie." Ps. 146 : 6 ; "Which keepeth truth forever." Jer. 10 : 10, margin ; "The Lord is the God of truth." — Consider further, likewise, how the Lord proclaimed his name to Moses at Sinai. Ex. 34 : 6 ; "And the Lord passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious ; long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands ; forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ; and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."



5. What important *general* relations do all things, and you especially, hold to God? *Ans.* All things, as created objects, hold the relation of *dependence*; and man, as rational, holds not only the relation of dependence, but that of *obligation* and *accountability*. Gen 1: 1; "In the beginning God *created* [brought into existence from nothing] the heavens and the earth." Rom. 11: 36; "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." Ps. 100: 3; "The Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." Ezek. 18: 4; "Behold," says God, "all souls are mine." And the apostle Paul, when addressing the Athenians on Mars-Hill, Acts 17: 24, 26, recognized God not only as having "made the world, and all things therein," but as having "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" and in his Epistle to the Romans, he recognizes all, not

only as *creatures* of God, but as *subjects* of his government, and *accountable* to Him. Rom. 14: 7; "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself;" and v. 13; "So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

6. What important *particular* relation do all men hold to God, in view of the gospel? *Ans.* That of those who are under condemnation of his holy law, and exposed justly to his righteous indignation; but of those also for whom provision is made for their pardon on their repentance, and who are graciously invited to a state of justification and acceptance with God through Jesus Christ, the "one Mediator between God and man." John 3: 16; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Rom. 11: 32; "For God hath concluded them all [all men] in

unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." 1 John 2: 2; "And he [Christ] is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

7. What *peculiar* relation do Christians hold to God? *Ans.* That of those who have been recovered to God according to the provision of his gospel, and who are now his "peculiar people, zealous of good works," and bound henceforth to "walk in newness of life." Eph. 2: 10; "For we [Christians] are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

8. What do you think of the *reasonableness* and *probability* of a revelation from God to man? — *Note.* Reflect deeply on *man's necessity*, and on what we cannot but admit must be *God's goodness* toward

man, as his creature. — *Note.* Read Leland's "Necessity and Advantage of the Christian Revelation."

9. If a revelation may be considered *probable*, how must it be as to its being fairly *intelligible*, and *satisfactorily attested*? *Ans.* It must be both, or reflection is cast on God.

10. What of the *Bible* as such a revelation? 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Heb. 1: 2; "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." — *Note.* Read the Preface to Scott's Bible.

11. If the Bible is not such a revelation, how can it be accounted for, that

the rites and observances it enjoins, and the remarkable facts it relates, should ever have obtained respect and credit in their day, as they are well known to have done? — *Note.* Read “Leslie’s Short Method with the Deists.”

12. How do you regard the evidence in favor of the Bible from prophecy, in particular? Compare John 13: 19. 14: 29. Isaiah 43: 9. — *Note.* Read “Newton on the Prophecies.”

13. Can it be that any man should be able to foretell future events, except as inspired of God to do it? — *Note.* Read “Nelson’s Cause and Cure of Infidelity.”

14. What must we necessarily think of unbelievers who rave against the Bible as unworthy of confidence? Jude v. 16; “These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words of vanity, having men’s persons in admiration, because of advantage.”

15. What do you think of the *moral sentiments* of the Bible compared with those of other professedly sacred books, as the Koran of the Mohammedans and the Shasters of the Hindoos, or with any works on morals by uninspired authors? And what, compared with the demands of enlightened consciences?

16. What, *in general*, does the Bible teach? *Ans.* "What man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." — *Assembly's Catechism.*

17. What, *in general*, of God? — *Note.* See under Question 4.

18. What, *in general*, of man? *Ans.* "That he is a creature of God, a free agent, moral and accountable, and destined to a state of retribution hereafter." See under Questions 5 and 6.

19. What, *in particular* of God, as to

the mode of his existence? *Ans.* That he is peculiar, or like Himself only; not like any of the creatures he has made, but triune. The Scripture says, he made man "in his own image;" but it has reference to man as rational and holy only (Comp. Gen. 1: 28), and not as to his mode of existence. The Scripture reveals first a *plurality* respecting God. This is intimated in the account of creation, Gen. 1: 26, and elsewhere in the Old Testament. See Gen. 3: 22. 11: 7. Isa. 6: 8. In the New Testament this plurality is revealed more fully, and becomes specific as a *Trinity*. So God is one (Deut. 6: 4), but one in such a sense that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all three make the Unity. Hence the Saviour gives the "name" of God in the formula of baptism. Matt. 28: 19; "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost." So also at the baptism of Christ, Luke 3: 22; "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice from heaven, which said, This is my beloved Son: in thee I am well pleased." Here the Holy Ghost is named expressly; the voice from heaven personates the Father, for who else should say "*my* beloved Son;" and the Saviour is of course the Son. So, out of many other passages, we have Eph. 2: 18, containing nearly the same: "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

20. What evidence have we, *in particular*, that Christ is God? *Ans.* Under the name "Angel of the Lord," or "Angel of Jehovah," and "Angel of the Covenant," he is commonly so recognized in the Old Testament; and in the New Testament, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, Acts 2:



38, says it was He who spake with Moses in Mount Sinai; from which, by comparing it with Ex. 19 : 19. 20 : 1, we may see that Christ is God : he gave the law. See John Pye Smith's "Scripture Testimony." The passages further which are concerned, need not all be referred to : The following, from the New Testament only, may be sufficient. John 1 : 1 ; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." To see who the Word was, compare v. 14 ; "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Acts 10 : 36 ; "Jesus Christ ; he is Lord of all." 1 John 5 : 20 ; "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." Jude v. 25 ; "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." — See under Question 19.

21. What evidence have we that the

Holy Spirit is God? — *Note.* The phrase; “in the name of,” Matt. 28: 19, includes the Holy Ghost as truly as it does the Father and the Son. Elsewhere also he is spoken of as God. Acts 5: 3, 4; “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . . Thou hast not lied unto men [that is, unto men only], but unto God.” And, with his divinity, his *personality* is particularly brought to view in the following passages: Acts 13: 2; “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me [that is, to me, or for me], Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” v. 4; “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed.” 16: 6; “Now when they [Paul and Timothy] had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.” 20: 28; “Take heed therefore unto your-

selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." Further, the Apostle Paul couples the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son, in the benediction he pronounces. 2 Cor. 13: 14; "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

22. What, *in particular* of man, as to his present character? Gen. 6: 5; "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually." Jer. 17: 9; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Matt. 15: 19; "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, — murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Rom. 3: 10-12; "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none

that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

23. What was his *original* or *primitive* character? Gen. 1: 26, 27; "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him." Eccl. 7: 29; "God made man upright."

24. If man is naturally of a different character now from what he was at first, how are we to account for it? — *Note.* Read Gen. 3, and compare Gen. 1: 26, 27 with Eccl. 7: 29, l. c. "but they have sought out many inventions."

25. How considerably is man depraved? Rom. 8: 7; "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Eph.

2: 3; "Among whom [children of disobedience] we all [the apostle includes himself, so does not refer to gross heathens merely] had our conversation in times past, . . . . and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." See under Question 22.

26. What evidence is there that the failure of the first pair, in the trial of their integrity, has affected so seriously their descendants? — *Note.* If we consider how, in the close of creation, "God saw every thing that he had made," — and, of course, man, — "and, behold, it was very good." Gen. 1: 31, and compare with this the state of man as he has ever in all ages shown himself to be, Ps. 14: 2, 3, we shall have evidence enough; and for the primary cause of all the difference between his first and present character, the Scriptures refer us to the transgression of the first pair. Rom. 5: 12; "Wherefore as by one man

sin entered into the world, and death by sin, — and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” — and v. 18, “By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;” also, v. 19, “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” Consider particularly Gen. 3: 7–10, 16–19, for its effect on the first pair themselves.

27. How can you defend such a trial? — *Note.* Consider if Adam, as the head and representative of the race, in the full power of his manhood, might not be expected to meet the trial with better promise of success for all, than could have been expected had each one been left to meet it for himself, coming to it, as in that case each must, in all the weakness and unskillfulness of young and immature powers. Consider also, largely, the argument of Abraham. Gen. 18: 25; “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”.

28. What, *without* the Bible, or from reason only, should you think of the probability that man could be recovered from his fallen and ruined state, to a state of acceptance and favor with God? Job 9: 2; "But how should man be just with God?" 1 Cor. 1: 21, f. c.; "In the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God."

29. What, *with* the Bible? John 3: 14-16; "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." 1 Tim. 1: 15; "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

30. How must man's recovery be ef-

fect? *Ans.* Only by his being regenerated, or born again of the Holy Ghost. John 1: 13; "Which [those who had become the sons of God] were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 3: 5; "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." —*Note.* The sinner is "born again," not of his own primary choice, but as chosen primarily of God. John 6: 44, f. c.; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Rom. 9: 16; "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Titus 3: 5; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The "carnal mind" is declared, Rom. 8: 7, "enmity against God;" and sinners are declared, Eph. 3: 1, "dead



in trespasses and sins." Now enmity cannot love ; it must be changed : nor can that which is dead have life, till life is wrought in it : it must be " quickened."

31. Suppose you have been really recovered or regenerated, as you hope, how was it with you as to God's *purpose* in effecting the change ? Eph. 1 : 4, 5 ; "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

32. Who is the first mover in regeneration, God or the sinner ? John 6 : 44 ; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Compare v. 37 ; "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Rom. 9 : 16 ; "So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that

runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Ps. 21: 3; "For thou preventest [goest before] him with the blessings of goodness."

33. What important relation holds between evangelical truth and regeneration?

*Ans.* That of an instrument in the hand of an agent, — the instrument being perfectly adapted, and the agent perfectly skilled and competent, to the production of the work contemplated. The truth has no efficiency in itself to produce the effect, but the whole efficiency is of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. 3: 6; "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." James 1: 18; "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." 1 Pet. 1: 23; "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

34. What of morality, or formal religious observance, or even serious thoughtfulness

and concern of mind with conviction of sin, as to producing or procuring regeneration? Titus 3: 5; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Compare Luke 18: 11; "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

35. What are the proper Scriptural evidences of regeneration, or recovery to God's favor? Matt. 7: 16; "Ye shall know them by their fruits." John 15: 14; "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Acts 9: 11; "Behold he prayeth." 1 John 3: 14; "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 4: 13; "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and he

in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." — *Note.* It is an evidence of regeneration if one is conscious of loving the *whole* character of God as exhibited in his word, his justice, as well as his mercy, and of rejoicing that he will punish the wicked as well as bless and glorify the righteous, — that he reigns, and will reign forever, the high and holy Sovereign of all.

36. What does the Bible teach, as to the *permanency* of our recovery when once effected? Job 17: 9; "The righteous also shall hold on his way." Ps. 37: 24; "Though he [the good man] fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." John 10: 27, 28; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Rom. 8: 28-30, particularly vs. 38, 39; "For I am persuaded that

neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Phil. 1:6; "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ."

37. What is the *ground* or *cause* of this perseverance of all true believers? 1 Pet. 1:5; "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 2 Tim. 4:18; "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, ['all dangers, temptations, and adversities,'] and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."

38. What as to any danger of hoping that we are recovered when we are not? 1 Cor. 3:18; "Let no man deceive himself." Prov. 16:25; "There is a way that

seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Matt. 7: 21-23; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shalt enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Mark the expression: "*I never knew you.*" As if He had said: "You may have hoped you were my disciple; but I never acknowledged you as such, and must exclude you positively and for ever."

39. What of the *final state* of them who shall prove not to have been recovered? John 3: 36; "He that believeth not the Son,

shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Matt. 35: 46; "These [those on the left hand in the final judgment] shall go away into everlasting punishment." 2 Thess. 1: 9; "Who [they that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ] shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

40. How are we to reconcile the future punishment of the wicked with the goodness of God? or may we conclude there is no such thing? *Ans.* Reconcile it just as we do their *present* punishment in this world; and we may no more conclude that there can be no such thing hereafter, than we may that there is no such thing now. It is as truly eternity with God now, as it will be when all the generations of men shall have died. Yet we may not say that God does not now punish sin. He may then punish it always as well.

41. What of the notion that the future punishment of the wicked spoken of in Scripture means *annihilation*? *Ans.* It is a notion merely, and without the least foundation whatever. Its advocates affect to found it on the Scripture, but are quite unable. If a creature is to be punished with everlasting destruction, he must continue to exist to receive it. Besides, “weeping” and “wailing” and “gnashing of teeth,” which are images the Scripture employs on the subject, can never be predicable of non-existence, but are the painful experiences of those that continue to exist. The punishment of the wicked therefore spoken of in Scripture cannot be annihilation.

42. How ought we to feel toward the character of God and his government in view of the eternal punishment of the wicked? Rev. 19: 1-3; “And after these things I heard a great voice of much



people in heaven, saying, Alleluia : salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments. For he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

43. Can a truly renewed heart fail to feel complacency, and take delight, in all God's *doings*, as well as in all his *attributes*, when rightly understood?

44. On becoming a Christian, what one duty in particular are you called upon timely to perform? Matt. 10: 32; "Who-soever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Compare Acts 2: 47; "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

45. What is the object in making a profession of religion ? 1 Pet. 2 : 9 ; . . . “ That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” 4 : 11 ; “ That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1 : 9 ; “ Called unto the fellowship of his Son.” 1 John 1 : 3 ; “ That ye also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

46. May, or may not, a person live and die a Christian secretly, and not make a profession ? Matt. 10 : 38 ; “ He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” 16 : 24, 25 ; “ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me [will be a Christian] let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.”

Compare Luke 8: 45-47. This woman, though glad to have been healed, yet shrank from recognition; but Christ would have her recognize, and bear testimony, to the honor of sovereign mercy. And let no sinner who ventures to hope he has been spiritually healed, withhold himself from professing Christ openly before the world. The strong tendency of a good hope is to a profession. Rom. 5: 5; "Hope maketh not ashamed." Matt. 5: 14-16; "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle," etc.

47. If a convert neglect to profess Christ because he fears he shall not live worthy of his profession, what of his excuse? — *Ans.* Only so much of ingratitude, and so much of distrust of Christ, who says, in effect, to every believer (2 Cor. 12: 9), "My grace is sufficient for thee." And again (Heb. 13: 5), "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

48. How, as to a trial of one's faith and Christian courage and determination to serve God, does making a profession of religion now compare with what it must have been in primitive times? — *Note.* Read with reference to the question, the Acts of the Apostles, and the early history of the Christian church.

49. What is a church? — *Ans.* A company of believers in Christ, united in the same faith and covenant, and associated together for the more profitable observance of the worship and ordinances he has appointed, and for the support and extension of his religion in the world. — *Note.* The two disciples with whom Jesus fell in company on their way to Emmaus, recognized his followers as a *distinct class*. Luke 24: 22; "Yea, and certain women also of *our company*." So Luke, speaking of Peter and John, who had been imprisoned,

says, Acts 4: 23, "being let go, they went to their own company;" and again, 15: 22, he speaks of "their own company" as the church, or part of "the whole church." In a large sense, all true churches collectively are the church — all true believers in the true God, and in the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. This is the church universal.

50. When, and after what manner, was the church first formed? Gen. 12: 1-3. —*Note.* We have here the first step towards forming the church, in God's call to Abraham. Compare Josh. 24: 2. Abram was now seventy-five years old; twenty-four years after, when he was ninety-nine, the next step was taken, and the church formed. Read the account Gen. 17: 1-14. The clause, Gen. 4: 26, "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord," and the phrase, Gen. 6: 2, "the sons of God," afford very slight evidence, if indeed any at

all, of an antediluvian church organization. This, in the family of Abraham, was evidently the first. It was, too, the foundation of the Jewish church, which is everywhere in the New Testament regarded as the foundation of the Christian church. The organization may be considered to have been comparatively rude, as being adapted to the age of the world when it was formed; but it looked forward to Christ; for so Christ says of Abraham, that 'he rejoiced to see his day, and that he saw it and was glad,' John 8: 56. Abraham believed in Christ prospectively, and God entered into covenant with him accordingly. To understand exactly how it was with Abraham, read Rom. 4: 10-12; how it was with Israel as a people, 11: 16-21; and how it is with Christians in reference to Abraham and the covenant made with him, Gal. 3: 11-29.

51. What of the form of the church now

as compared with its form before Christ, or till he came? Heb. 9: 10; "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation," — that is, till the gospel should introduce a spiritual worship. 1 Pet. 2: 5; "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house," — a society or church in whose worship there is no mediation of priest or sacrifice, but the offering of the penitent and contrite heart by every humble worshipper for himself through the mediation of Christ alone. Phil. 3: 3; "For we are the circumcision which worship God in Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Col. 2: 11; "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." — *Note.* The Christian is the abiding or permanent form of the church, — a

form not to be superseded by another, as the Patriarchal was by the Jewish, and the Jewish by the Christian. Heb. 12: 28; "A kingdom which cannot be removed," — which is to remain till the end. So the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is recognized by the Apostle Paul as abiding to the end. 1 Cor. 11: 26; "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

52. What are the ordinances of the Christian church? — *Ans.* Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Luke 22: 19, 20; "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you." Matt. 38: 19; "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

53. When were the ordinances insti-



tuted? and which before the other? — *Ans.* They seem to have been instituted in the reverse order of their first observance by the convert, the Lord's Supper at the close of Christ's last Passover, and Baptism just before his ascension. See Luke 22: 19, 20. Matt. 26: 26–30, for the Lord's Supper; and for Baptism, Matt. 28: 19, comparing verse 18, — “and Jesus came,” — with Acts 1: 4–9, — “and being assembled,” etc.

54. How does it appear that baptism in the Christian church takes the place of circumcision in the Abrahamic and Jewish? — *Ans.* The covenant with Abraham was with him as “the Father of us all,” — all Christians as well as believing Jews before Christ came, — all who believe, Rom. 4: 16. Hence it was called an “everlasting covenant;” that is, a covenant that should last while there should be believers. Compare Gen. 17: 13, 19: Isaiah 24: 5.

Circumcision was, by God's special appointment, made the seal of the covenant, and so it continued till Christ appointed Baptism to be the seal. The two, therefore, being seals of the same covenant, are, of course, of the same significancy; and circumcision being discontinued, baptism takes its place.

55. How, that infant children of believing parents should be subjects of baptism, and their parents under obligation to offer them in baptism accordingly?—*Ans.* In God's wisdom and goodness, they were included in the covenant at first, and have never been excluded,—the covenant has never been restricted,—therefore they are proper subjects of baptism; and the duty of believing parents to offer them remains. The fact that in the New Testament the household is spoken of as having been baptised on the faith of its believing head, shows the same. While Lydia and her

household were baptized, she only is spoken of as believing, — “If ye have judged *me* to be faithful,” that is, believing, or to have become a Christian, said she. See Acts 16: 15. Compare also 1 Cor. 1: 16. It was not to be expected that in the New Testament we should find the covenant appointed anew. It was not necessary that it should be. This recognition of it is enough. The Jews had always been accustomed to the recognition of children with their parents in the covenant. Consider also how, as infant baptism was undoubtedly included in the command of Christ appointing the ordinance, — Matt. 28: 19, — it has accordingly always been practised ever since the days of the apostles, from whom, and the first Christians, it must of course have come, as the early Christian Fathers testify.

56. What of the *mode* of baptism? —

*Ans.* If we consider fully and candidly *all*

*the circumstances, with all the probabilities* involved in each individual case in which baptism is spoken of in the New Testament, we shall hardly be able to think it could have been any other, in any instance, than that of sprinkling, or affusion. Acts 10: 47, implies plainly that what was contemplated was, that water was to be brought for use in some vessel carried in the hand. So, too, in the case of the jailor, Acts 16: 33. In other cases also, as that of Paul, it is plainly next to impossible it should have been by any other mode. Acts 9: 1-19, f. c. compare particularly v. 9 with vs. 17-19, f. c., where the circumstances are conclusive. Baptism is something besides going to, or into, the water. Individuals are spoken of as going to, or into, the water, and then as being baptized. The water was applied to them, not they to the water. Besides, since the gospel is to be preached in all the world, — “to every creature,” —

it may be reasonably expected that its rite of discipleship should be such that it might be complied with under any circumstances, — on a journey, for instance, as was the case with the eunuch, Acts 8: 28, 36–39; that it would be safe, decent, and becoming; in keeping with the greatest delicacy and propriety; nor less with the greatest self-possession, composure, reverence, and solemnity in all concerned. And what could partake more of this character than the mode of sprinkling clean water upon the candidate? It is to be remembered, too, that the water applied in baptism is an *emblem* only, not as if by any quantity, however applied to us, or we to it, we were to be made clean, but it denotes purification and consecration henceforth to the Lord. See Isaiah 52: 15, where it is spoken of prospectively in this light in reference to the Messiah and the reign of the gospel: “So shall he sprinkle many nations.” Ob-

serve the note and cuts in illustration of the passage in the Comprehensive Commentary.

57. What must we naturally conclude as to the essential importance of *mere mode* or *manner* in *any* religious observance? 1 Sam. 16: 7; "The Lord looketh on the heart." Gal. 5: 6; "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." Rom. 10: 10; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." John 4: 24; "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." — *Note.* Where a specific form *itself* is prescribed, there it must, of course, be essential. Under the Mosaic law, where the priest was directed (Lev. 14: 27) "*tô sprinkle* the oil with his *right* finger," it would not have done for him to *pour* the oil nor to sprinkle it with his *left* finger; but where mode or form is not

specifically enjoined, there it can be of no essential importance; and such is the case in relation to baptism.

58. What difference is there between Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as to *repetition*? — *Ans.* The celebration of the Lord's Supper is to be repeated often to the end of life; baptism is to be received but once. 1 Cor. 11:26; "For as oft as ye eat this bread." — *Note.* The manner of expression here necessarily implies frequency in observing the ordinance of the Supper. Acts 2:4; "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Here the manner of expression implies as clearly that baptism is not to be repeated. And where one baptized in infancy allows himself to receive baptism again in mature years, what does he do but virtually despise the wisdom and goodness of God, who plainly in wisdom and goodness saw fit to include the infants in his covenant

with believing parents? And how he reflects upon his pious parent (who offered him in baptism in obedience to God's requirements), as though he would take back that consecration they made of him to God, imploring God's blessing on him then in the morning of life, that God would keep him, and bring him into his kingdom. As if Isaac, on coming to be a man, had complained of his father Abraham for obeying God's command, and had wished he had not been circumcised when an infant, that he might have the pleasure of receiving the rite in manhood. Let any one who is tempted to renounce his infant baptism and be baptized again, study his Bible more closely, and understand how God's covenant with believers under the Christian dispensation is the same that it was under the Jewish and the Patriarchal back to Abraham, in whose family God was pleased first to form a church organization.



59. What form of church organization and government is prescribed in the Scriptures? *Ans.* No one form in express terms; but obligations, duties, and principles are recognized, instructions to churches are given, and doings of churches are related, which leave no room to doubt that the Congregational is the only true scriptural form. This, too, agrees best every way with the main object and general spirit of the Gospel, which seeks to enlighten all to know their duty, and then holds them to the responsibility of doing it; making every simple, individual church an active, working body in all its members, and not a part of a compound, irresponsible, inert body, to be worked by some authority out of itself, whether Pope, Bishop, or Elders and Pastors. Such it probably came from the Jewish Synagogue state, they who made up the habitual congregation of professed believers being "the

church" in each particular place as then spoken of. So our Saviour, Matt. 18: 17, "tell it unto the church," for there is no reason to suppose he spoke here proleptically, but rather every reason to conclude that he spoke as he could be naturally understood to speak, of the customary synagogue congregation. The term, that is, the word, *church*, was doubtless used in the restrictive sense, as we now use it, when it came to be employed to designate a Christian brotherhood; but it was still in the Congregational sense, including all the brotherhood in common. Such was the case no doubt, and it is confirmed by the history of the first Christian council, Acts xv., and the manner in which Paul speaks of the relations of individual members of a church in the matter of church-discipline, and of a whole church to individual members of same,—all showing plainly that the first and apostolic form of

the Christian church was purely the independent Congregational; nor have any of all the advocates of other forms ever been able to show a scripture basis for their forms to compare at all with this for the Congregational; and it is pleasing to notice how the tendency of things at large in the Christian world seems to be more and more to liberality towards this form. Thus in the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in Berlin, Prussia, Sept. 1857, there were present to commune together from all the different forms of evangelical profession "not much less," says the report of one of their number, "than 1,400 men of position in church and state;" an example this, certainly, of inclination toward the Congregational principle, though among denominations, rather than individual churches.

60. Is the Gospel to be succeeded by another dispensation, or is it the last? — *Ans.*

God has dealt with the race under different dispensations, as the Patriarchal, Mosaic or Jewish, and the Christian; but that the Gospel or Christian dispensation is the last under which he will deal with it in this probationary state, may be inferred from various Scriptures. Heb. 1: 2, where the time of the Gospel is called "the last days;" 9: 26, in which Christ is said to have appeared once "in the end of the world;" and 1 Cor. 10: 11, where the apostle speaks of himself and his fellow-Christians as living under the last dispensation, "upon whom," says he, "the ends of the world are come." Compare also Gal. 4: 4, and Eph. 1: 10. See under Question 51.

61. What may be expected in the maturity of this Christian dispensation? — *Ans.* The millennium, or that state of the world in which truth and piety shall correct and do away with sin and wickedness in all their forms, and promote universal purity,

peace, and happiness in all mankind. Dan. 2: 44.

62. What of its termination? — *Ans.* It will terminate in the end of the world, and a final judgment of all the individuals of the race, in which each and every one will be rewarded according to his deeds. 2 Pet. 3: 10; "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Eccl. 11: 9; "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." 12: 14; "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Matt. 12: 36; "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." 2 Cor. 5: 10; "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Compare Acts 17: 30, 31. Rom. 2: 6-11. 14: 10, 12. Matt. 25: 31-46.

63. What great event will there be in connection with the end of the world, and preceding the final judgment? John 5: 28, 29; "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, [the voice of the Son of God,] and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Comp. 1 Cor. 15: 1-58.

64. What of the final state of the righteous and of the wicked? Matt. 25: 46; "And these [those on the left hand in the final judgment] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

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### III. MISCELLANEOUS.

1. What two great principles must the Christian always observe in all his conduct? Matt. 22: 37-40; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

2. What one great principle of pecu-

liarity must the Christian observe toward his fellow-Christians? John 13: 34; "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you; that ye also love one another." 1 John 3: 11; "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye love one another."

3. What assemblage of Christian virtues and graces ought every Christian to seek to make his attainment? Phil. 4: 8; "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." 2 Pet. 1: 5-8; "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godli-



ness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. Why is consistency of conduct of special importance in the Christian? Matt. 5: 14; "Ye are the light of the world." v. 16; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." 1 Pet. 2: 12; "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak evil against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

5. Why, special regard to exact truth, without coloring? — *Ans.* Because, without special regard to it, most people are very liable to give a coloring, more or less, to

what they say. Acts 24: 16; "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Eph. 4: 25; "Wherefore, putting away all lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Col. 3: 9, 10; "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." — *Note.* Even Christians are not always as careful as they should be, to avoid all false and exaggerated representations.

6. When conscience and expediency conflict, which shall we follow? or, when the doing of a thing is questionable in itself, but in present circumstances seems to promise good — shall we do it? John 7: 24; "Judge not according to appearance,

but judge righteous judgment." Rom. 3: 8; "And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come, whose damnation is just." — *Note.* God only, in any case, can foresee all the ultimate bearings and results of our doing or not doing this or that. Therefore we must govern ourselves, not by expediency, but by the unerring rule of God's word. Guided by that, we shall always come out right. A distinguished president of one of New England's most favored colleges was wont to say to his scholars: "If you have any doubt, young gentlemen, respecting a thing, whether it is right, never do it, however fair it may promise."

7. When our views, as to measures, or a course of policy to be pursued, differ from those of others with whom we are called to act, how tenacious may we be of our own? and how shall we treat those

from whom we are constrained to differ? Gal. 2: 11; "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, for he was to be blamed." Acts 15: 36-40. — *Note.* Paul and Barnabas, on occasion of difference, "departed asunder," yet not in anger, as appears. We are not to be opinionated and self-willed, but open to conviction of misapprehension; yet, when settled in judgment, after prayer and deliberation, we are to be firm and persevering in what we judge to be right, till we are fairly proved to be mistaken. If found in a minority, though we may retain our own opinions, yet having discharged our duty while the matter in question was pending, we are now bound, — unless we withdraw, — to abide *in good faith*, till Providence shall open further.

8. What should you regard your duty in relation to meetings of the church, whether

for worship or for business? Heb. 10: 23-35; "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." Read the whole passage.—*Note.* In meetings for business, though it is not expected the sisters in a church will debate or vote *in form*, it is expected (see 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35) they will be present, to hear and judge; and their presence is of great importance. The opinion, or judgment, of the most enlightened and best women, has deservedly great influence with the most enlightened and best men.

9. Is it a sufficient excuse for absence from the worship of God's house, that the weather is not pleasant, or the preacher not brilliant and popular,—that the labors of the week have been exhausting, or that you have a difficulty with the church or society, or any of the members of either? Acts 2: 1; "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with

one accord in one place.” — *Note.* It was the remark of a good man, — “an old disciple,” — now gone to his rest, that if he were ever to be absent from the communion without good reason, he should think he ought to make an acknowledgment to the church.

10. If it is a duty to *attend* the meetings of the church, how is it as to *acting* when any business calling for action comes before it? Gal. 6 : 5 ; “For every man shall bear his own burden.” Compare Rom. 2 : 6. 1 Cor. 3 : 8. 1. c. — *Note.* How many Christian professors seldom or never fail to be present and act in secular meetings, who seldom or never attend and act in church meetings! Is this right, and according to Christ’s instruction? Matt. 6 : 33 ; “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” Ps. 137 : 5, 6 ; “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, [another name only for religion and its interests,] let my right

hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

11. If you refuse to act on any question, how will it be as to your right afterwards to criticize and condemn the action of others? Compare Acts 24:19; "Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me."

12. Is a wish to save time, or to avoid the responsibility of acting, a justifiable excuse for not attending and not acting?—

*Note.* In any matter under consideration, if the result should depend on a single vote, might not that vote be yours? and how then as to your responsibility? If you would say you have not made up your mind on the subject, how is it as to one's duty as a Christian and a member of the church of Christ, to give attention to a subject so as to have a mind upon it, what is

right and proper, and act it out, one way or another, as one who will do his duty, when called to, although it be trying and responsible? Reflect on Rom. 14: 5; "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Eccl. 9: 10; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

13. How ought Christians to treat one another in the common intercourse of life? — *Note.* See under Ques. 2. Rom. 12: 10; "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." James 4: 11, 12; "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" Reflect on Matt. 23: 8; "All ye are brethren."



14. If a member of the same church with you, offend against you, what is your duty in the case? Matt. 18: 15-17; "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

15. Though the offence of another be not against you directly, but against your pastor, or any other brother or sister, against the church in general, or even against any of the world without, would you not still owe it in faithfulness to yourself, to the erring, to the church, to the world, and

above all to God Most High, to “rebuke” him? Lev. 19: 17; “Thou shalt not hate [be offended with] thy brother in thine heart [secretly and not tell him of it], thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.”

16. How should we administer Christian reproof to an erring brother or sister? Gal. 6: 1; “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.”

17. Have we any right to assume that the erring will repel our fidelity, and therefore neglect our duty to him through fear of losing his presence in public worship, and his pecuniary aid in supporting it?

18. On becoming a member of the church, should you ever be admonished yourself, in what temper and spirit will it be your duty to receive the admonition?

Ps. 141 : 5 ; “ Let the righteous smite me : it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me : it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head : for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.”

19. Are you willing to *engage*, that, on becoming a member of the church, you will give and receive reproof in this manner, and in general abide by the instructions brought to view in these Questions ?

20. Do you shrink from assuming the obligations of a life so strict and faithful every way ? Luke 9 : 62 ; “ And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” — *Note.* Estimate by what is required, how pure, holy, and loving Christ would have all his followers ; and how, if all would only live in the spirit and manifestation of such a life, it would prove as “ life from the dead ” to all the world around.

21. What, as to the conduct you are to maintain toward the world? Eph. 5: 15; "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Col. 4: 5, 6; "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." 1 Thess. 4: 10-12; "We beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more [in love], and that ye study to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

22. What, as to faithfulness in all appointments and engagements?—*Note.* The highest example was set us by the Saviour. Matt. 26: 32; "But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee." 28: 16;

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him.” The Psalmist also describes the good man as one who will abide by his pledge, although it prove to his disadvantage. Ps. 15: 4; “He that swear-eth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

23. What, of your duty as a Christian to support the public ministrations of the gospel, and spread it abroad in the world? Luke 10: 7, 2d c.; “The laborer is worthy of his hire.” 1 Cor. 9: 14; “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” Compare vs. 4, 5, 6, 12. — *Note.* In these passages it is contemplated that the preacher of the gospel has a just claim to support from those to whom he ministers; and each one is equally bound to pay his proportion of the expense, according to his ability and

the amount of his accommodation. If the minister waive his claim, he so far virtually gives it to them who ought to pay it, or to the cause of religion in general. Matt. 28: 19; "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." — *Note.* Here we have Christ's great command, showing how, not his first disciples alone, but the church prospectively as well, is solemnly charged to publish and spread abroad the gospel till all, in all the world, are made acquainted with it.

24. By what rule shall we be governed, as to the amount we shall give for the support and spread of the gospel? — *Note.* The earliest rule to give, in general, to the

Lord was, to give one tenth. So Jacob at Bethel. Gen. 28: 22; "Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Compare Lev. 27: 32; "The tenth shall be holy to the Lord." Under the gospel, the rule is,—"as God hath prospered" us, and "according to that a man hath." 1 Cor. 16: 2. 2 Cor. 8: 12. The same, indeed, was the rule under the law of Moses. See his farewell speech to Israel. Deut. 16: 16, l. c. 17; "And they shall not appear before the Lord empty; every man shall give *as he is able*, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."

25. In what *you* do for the support and extension of the gospel, do *you* mean to be governed by this rule?

26. Ought any to be regarded as true and consistent Christians, who refuse to be governed by this rule? John 15: 14; "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

27. In any religious society, is it right to call on some to do *more*, while others do *less*, than their just and fair proportion? 2 Cor. 8: 13, 14; "For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened, but . . . . that there may be equality."

28. How ought you to regard beneficence and liberality, in general?—*Ans.*

1. As 'lending to the Lord,' Prov. 19: 17.

2. As a 'sacrifice with which God is well pleased,' Heb. 13; 16. 3. As 'what we

should do to all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith,'

Gal. 6: 10. 4. As acting in conformity to

that great saying of Christ,—"It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:

35.—*Note.* Consider also what Christ said of the poor widow who cast in two mites

into the treasury, Mark 12: 42-44; and especially what the Apostle Paul enjoins

on Timothy, 1 Tim. 6: 17, 18; "Charge



them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, — that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.”

29. What is *conformity* to the world? and what is the duty of the Christian in relation to it? — *Note.* By the world is meant all those in general who are not Christians; and conformity to it means compliance with their opinions and practices. The Christian may understand his duty as to conformity to the world, from the following Scriptures, Rom. 12: 2; “Be not conformed to this world.” 1 Pet. 1: 13–16; “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope unto the end . . . . as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former

lusts in your ignorance ; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; [all speech and behavior] because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 John 2 : 15, 16 ; " Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." — *Note.* If you cannot ask the blessing of God upon what you are thinking to do, and hope to review it with thankfulness, refrain from it ; and even with this rule, you will chance sometimes to get snared. Whatever the world, and the great body of Christians, condemn as inconsistent with piety, and think less of the Christian professor for doing, — as dancing, attending the theatre, and playing games of chance and the like, with all vain and foolish amusements, and trifling

conversation, — these things avoid, as you would have a pure conscience, and enjoy the complacent smile of the Saviour. See Ques. 28, 1st series.

30. What, in relation to the Sabbath, is your duty, — first, *toward yourself*? Ex. 20: 8; “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” — *Note.* The strict and careful observance of the Sabbath is, of the highest personal benefit to the Christian.

31. What is your duty as to the performance of any secular labor or business on the Sabbath? Ex. 20: 9; “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.” — *Note.* All the work, labor, or business that is needful for one to do, the command contemplates he shall do in six days. So it says expressly “*all* thy work.” The prohibitory clause likewise forbids doing any work on the Sabbath, v. 10, “in it thou shalt not do *any* work.”

32. What, in relation to the Sabbath, is your duty — second, *towards others*? Ex. 20 : 10. . . . . “Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates,” — that is, neither you yourself, nor any under your care, or sharing your hospitality, shall you allow to “do any work” on the Sabbath. — *Note.* The proper observance of the Lord’s day, on the part of all the members of a truly religious family, is well adapted to make a deep and salutary impression upon any one, especially any one who happens to be in such a family from a family which pays little or no regard to the Sabbath.

33. What should be your regard for the conversion of sinners, and the upbuilding of the church of which you shall be a member? Ps. 119 : 136; “Rivers of water run.

down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." Read the Book of Jeremiah in illustration. Consider, also, in illustration of a desire to gather others and build up the church, the example of Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and that of Philip of Bethsaida. John 1: 41, 45, 46. These, making the acquaintance of Jesus themselves, were anxious to bring their friends to know him: "We have found the Messias, . . . him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." . . . "Come and see."

34. What of the instrumentalities, especially that of the parent, — his instruction, authority, counsel, exhortation, and prayer, — all the various influences he can employ? Gen. 18: 19; "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Compare Eph. 6: 4; "And, ye

fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Compare 2 Tim. 1 : 5. And generally in relation to all, reflect on Rom. 12 : 6-8 ; " Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given unto us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation ; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

35. What of the Sabbath school ? Mark 10 : 14 ; " Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Compare Luke 14 : 33 ; " Go ye out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in."

36. On a change of residence, what duty

will you owe the church you leave, and what, the church to which you shall go? —

*Note.* Paul recognizes the members of the church at Rome, Rom. 12: 4, 5, — at Corinth, 1 Cor. 12: 12–27, and at Ephesus, Eph. 4: 25, — all in their several connections, *as in the closest bonds of unity one with another*, even as the different members of the human body — from which we may infer the duty of holding open, free, and hearty membership in any church, wherever we may reside, and of coöperating cheerfully with it for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ. Whenever you go from the church to which you belong, — if for *transient* residence, take a letter of introduction to the church, or pastor of the church, where you go, — and if for *permanent* residence, a letter of dismissal and recommendation. And be careful *to deliver* your letter and be recognized at once as a Christian professor. Many fail to do so,

and willingly hide their Christian profession. Consider, also, when you go where there are several churches, in connection with which of them you may hope to be most useful as a Christian, and not in which you may chance to strike higher in the world's esteem. Every way, plan for Christ, and live to him, rather than to yourself.

37. In view now, then, of all the Questions in all the series, what, may I hope, is your regard for the Christian profession? —

*Note.* Let me hope this, of Ruth to Naomi her mother-in-law, may be appropriate to express your regard. Ruth 1: 16, 17; “And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God; where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be



buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

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### CONCLUSION.

You have now examined what involves the essential principles and duties of the Christian profession. Nor can you, I think, be otherwise than deeply sensible that very great importance attaches to the manner in which you enter upon and prosecute that profession. The end takes character from the beginning. See, therefore, that you begin well. Be always and everywhere a hearty, consistent Christian. This is the way, and the only sure way, to be what every Christian ought to be; the only way to glorify God, and do the greatest good to men. Be thorough in the beginning of your Christian life, and you will be the

more likely to persevere. Let nothing break the regularity and constancy of your private intercourse with the Bible and with God. Thus you will come to be an intelligent, growing, useful Christian,—“like a tree planted by the rivers of waters,” whose fruit shall not fail, nor leaf wither, Ps. 1: 3.

END.

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